

Obscene. I called them
Whore, slut, cunt, more.

That made them buy.
I didn't have to sell,
They stole from me.
I worked the whole town.
They'd wait for me,
And everyone let me in.

-- William Virgil Davis

Bristol, CT

The Plantsitters

Friends and strangers bring them
their run-down philodendrons,
their lonesome geraniums,
vases of jaded pussywillows.

John talks kindly to the plants,
plays them records of birdsong,
cricketchirp, sounds of dusk
and dawn, and the sea.
Susan soothes them with recorder
music, knowing that Bach has been
proven a tonic for house plants,
acid rock the deaths of them.

Are the plants benefitting?
Yes, but they can't hold a bloom
to the look of well-being budding
on the faces, in the eyes
of the sitters.

The Excuse

Unlike the shy lower animals,
Our retiring, hard-to-know neighbor comes
Briefly out of his house and shell
When trouble knocks.

The night a rampaging, souped-up car
Leaped our hedge, sheared off a pine
And plastered it, crashing, into his oak
He was there. When I was solicitous
About the mangled bark, he spoke
Comfortingly, "Oaks can take
A lot." Later, he broke
Off a crushed twig of the evergreen
Murmuring, "M-m-m, it smells good."

When a tornado struck, he was neighborly,
And there have been other times.
But it would take a dropped bomb
To bring out the man completely --
Too late to tell
Whether we could love him as well
As we love ourselves.

-- Elaine V. Emans

Minneapolis, MN

Con Man

The gifts I buy and offer you, my dear,
may seem installments on a payment plan
devised to ease you, an impoverished heart
finds purse more open than the inner man.

When you unwrap them I hope you can find
forgiveness for the way I try to meet
the promissory notes you hold, my name
proved to your eyes I walk on honest feet.

Bankrupt, burglar, forger, I confess
the signature I swore to writ in sand
you witnessed when I opened love's account,
I bring you gifts to hide my empty hand.

A Field You Can Not Own

You thought there was a For Sale sign
on her heart and decided to buy
the property but sometimes a clover
meadow turns to sand and meadowlarks
vanish before the hawk -- what makes
love or good earth barren?
She gave herself in trust
and you thought it was fee simple,
the promised land you hoped to settle.
She tried to tell you that love
can only be deserved but you
wanted to make a down payment
on a field you could never own.